



# voice

■ vocational rehabilitation ■ disability determinations ■ independent living ■

## A Caring Company

The Home Depot supports individuals with disabilities

Last year, Brenda Simmons, VR regional director, completed a provider review on Casco Area Workshop in Harrisonville, Mo. Casco is one of VR's Supported Employment Service Providers. Charles Myler, vocational services manager of Casco, informed Simmons about an employer that went out of its way to hire individuals with disabilities.

Here is what Myler had to say, in his own words, about the employer:

"Casco Supported Employment Program provided placement services (last year) for Darren Prendergast at The Home Depot store in Belton, Mo. He applied for a lot associate position and was approved to begin working as soon as corporate headquarters approved it. They have a special program for hiring people with developmental disabilities that does not require them to complete computer-based training.

"Because this young man has a physical disability, he was not covered under this program. This was where The



Darren Prendergast, former VR consumer, works as a lot associate at The Home Depot in Belton, Mo. Prendergast received supported employment services through Casco Area Workshop in Harrisonville, Mo.

Home Depot's human resource manager went the extra mile to see that this young man was hired. The HR manager asked for any documentation from school records that might show any type of learning issues. We were able to locate additional documents that did meet the requirements.

"In a period of about two weeks, the HR manager continued faxing documents to corporate headquarters that helped to show that Darren did meet the requirements. On April 10, 2006, he started his first day of

employment as a lot associate.

"In this day and time, a lot of companies state that they support hiring people with disabilities but do otherwise. The Home Depot Corporation and its managers prove that they care about people with disabilities."

Jenny Yinger was Darren Prendergast's VR counselor in the Kansas City Transition office. According to her, Prendergast's case was opened in November 2004 when he was a senior at Raymore-Peculiar High School in Peculiar, Mo. Prendergast has ▶

## A Caring Company (continued from p.1)

Alport syndrome, which affects his hearing and his kidney functions and resulted in a kidney transplant in 2002.

Prendergast participated in the Cooperative Work Experience program while in high school. After graduation, he was unemployed and struggled to find work that would be appropriate. He began supported employment services with

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**“The Home Depot Corporation and its managers prove that they care about people with disabilities.”**

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Casco Area Workshop in Harrisonville. These services assisted Prendergast in developing a resume, practicing interviewing skills and contacting employers.

Prendergast began working at The Home Depot in Belton as a lot associate. The supported employment services helped him manage his health concerns in relation to the weather and the demands of his new job. Casco's job coaching services, provided from April 2006 to June 2006, also helped to ensure that Prendergast would be able to successfully retain his position, which he has done so since job coaching ended. ■

## Setting a Brand-New Record for DDS

Implementing new method  
speeds up claim processing

**D**isability Determination Services (DDS) is moving closer to a complete electronic process for working Social Security disability claims. To set the stage for a new method of medical-record retrieval, DDS began obtaining the fax numbers of vendors (hospitals, physicians, etc.). Rather than using the traditional mail service for requesting and receiving claimants' medical records, DDS started the widespread use of fax machines. This change has enabled a faster turnaround time for claim processing.

Support staff were responsible for acquiring vendors' phone and fax numbers, addresses, and permission to fax requests. To spice up the task, the Jefferson City office developed a contest last summer for the secretaries.



Heather Platt, billing specialist II in the Jefferson City DD office, won the platinum record award.

Each week the office counted the number of calls made per secretary. The staff member who made the most calls in a week was awarded a gold record; the runner-up received a silver record. The biggest prize, a platinum record, was reserved for the secretary who made the most calls during the three-month contest.

Missouri ranked first in the nation, and the Jefferson City office led the state, in updating fax numbers. Vendor updates totaled 1,593, with Edie Drinkall and Heather Platt making a combined total of 1,142 calls. Platt prevailed and received the platinum record for her total of 619 calls. ■



# voice

**T**he VR Voice is your voice. Please tell us how your newsletter can best serve you. What would you like to see in upcoming issues? Call Lisa Sone at (573) 526-7010, e-mail her at [lisa.sone@vr.dese.mo.gov](mailto:lisa.sone@vr.dese.mo.gov), or send your ideas/comments to her attention at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, 3024 Dupont Circle, Jefferson City, MO 65109.

## Employee Changes — Sept. 2006 through Jan. 2007

### Promotions

**John Broom**, a regional manager, promoted to director, claimant services, in Central Office DD

**Kimberly Conrad**, a senior counselor, promoted to district supervisor of the Springfield South VR office

**Ann Marie Fleming**, a counselor, promoted to senior counselor in the Kansas City East VR office

**Melissa Gallup**, a counselor, promoted to senior counselor in the Farmington VR office

**Kathleen Kopriva**, a counselor, promoted to senior counselor in the St. Louis West VR office

**Carla Luebbert**, a CIT Trainee, promoted to CIT I in the Jefferson City DD office

**Michael Metz**, a senior counselor, promoted to assistant district supervisor in the Springfield South VR office

**Michelle Scherer**, director, claimant services, promoted to DDS administrator in Central Office DD

**Robert Tucker**, a counselor, promoted to senior counselor in the Kansas City Downtown VR office

**Jayne Young**, a counselor, promoted to senior counselor in the Columbia VR office

**The following DD counselors have been promoted to senior counselors:**

**Alison Alaimo**, Springfield  
**Marilyn Banks**, Jefferson City  
**Myra Belshe**, Jefferson City  
**Angela Bennett**, Florissant

**Jennifer Black**, Jefferson City

**Amy Blattel**, Cape Girardeau

**Lisa Buhr**, Jefferson City

**Christina Coleman**, St. Louis South

**Michele Delgado**, St. Louis South

**Jennifer Dunlap**, Cape Girardeau

**Michelle Perkins**, Cape Girardeau

**Angela Reynolds**, Kansas City

**Kelly Smith**, Cape Girardeau

**Victor Washburn**, Florissant

### New Hires

**Delores Boatright**, a counselor in the Joplin VR office

**Mari Briggs**, a billing specialist I in Central Office VR

**Erin Dennis**, a secretary I in the Chillicothe VR office

**Tonya Fambro**, an assistant director/VR counselor in the Cape Girardeau VR office

**Melinda Fox**, a counselor in the Farmington VR office

**Stephen Garman**, a counselor in the Joplin VR office

**Elizabeth Gonzalez**, a counselor in the Kansas City North VR office

**Mary Beth Lewis**, a counselor in the Springfield South VR office

**Irene Morelock**, a counselor in the Springfield North VR office

**Cynthia Ormsby**, a counselor in the Kansas City North VR office

**Jamilah Stanfield**, a counselor in the Kansas City Downtown VR office.

**Peggy Stroburg**, a counselor in the Kansas City North VR office

**Jill Verslues**, an accountant I in Central Office VR

### Transfers

**Jackie Crawford**, a senior counselor in the Springfield South VR office, transferred to the Springfield North VR office.

**Melissa Gentry**, a secretary III in the Kansas City East VR office, transferred to the Kansas City Transition VR office.

**Denise Kinhead**, a senior counselor in the Kansas City North VR office, transferred to the Kansas City East VR office.

### Resignations

**Kelly Backues**, an accountant I in Central Office VR

**Karen Bailey**, a senior counselor in the Kansas City East VR office

**Patricia Cowan**, a counselor in the Florissant DD office

**Jamey Diehl**, a counselor in the Kansas City North VR office

**Debbie Frawley**, a secretary III in the St. Louis South VR office

**Leigh Garvin**, a senior counselor in the Jefferson City DD office

**Angela Green**, a senior counselor in the Jefferson City DD office

**Ashley Hockersmith**, a counselor in the Kansas City North VR office

**Katrice Kendle**, a professional relations specialist in the St. Louis South DD office

**Kirk Nadler**, a senior counselor in the Jefferson City VR office

**Brooke Poskin**, a counselor in the St. Louis South DD office

**Laura Roediger**, a senior counselor in the Kansas City DD office



## Resignations (cont.)

**Jacquette Smith**, a counselor in the St. Louis South DD office

**Deana Sprouse**, a counselor in the Chillicothe VR office

**Rosalee Suchsland**, a senior counselor in the Chillicothe VR office

**Rachelle Teague**, senior counselor in the Cape Girardeau DD office

**Emily Van Gundy**, a senior counselor in the St. Louis South DD office

## Retirements

**Rebecca Arthur**, a senior counselor in the Joplin VR office, retired Sept. 1, 2006, with more than 21 years of service.

**Phillip Eldred**, a senior counselor in the Springfield North VR office, retired Sept. 1, 2006, with 25 years of service.

**Wayne Gillam**, DDS administrator in Central Office, retired Oct. 31, 2006, with more than 27 years of service.

**Edith (Nadine) Heriford**, a billing

specialist II in the Chillicothe VR office, retired Sept. 1, 2006, after 14 years of service.

**Judith Kozeny**, a senior counselor in the St. Louis South VR office, retired Dec. 31, 2006, with more than 27 years of service.

**Roberta Rubin**, a senior counselor in the Kansas City Downtown VR office, retired Sept. 1, 2006, with more than 20 years of service.

**Jenelle Schwieterman**, QA specialist in the Jefferson City DD office, retired Nov. 30, 2006, with more than 23 years of service.

# Voice of our consumers

In this section, consumers, partners/suppliers and division employees can voice their opinions, views or appreciation to our division and staff. Some letters will be printed in their entirety while longer letters might only have excerpts printed. Consumers' names are omitted to protect their confidentiality. All letters are subject to editing.

### Feedback from a letter the VR Central Office received from one of Elaine Platz's consumers

I am so deeply grateful to Voc. Rehab for my education – thank you! I went to school full time for the past six years, graduated (4.0) with my master's in Speech-Language Pathology and just began a job in the medical field.

When I went back to school, I was a newly single mother of three, two of which have disabilities. Voc. Rehab made it possible for me to turn things around. I love my career! Thanks.

**Elaine Platz is a senior counselor in the Springfield South VR office.**

### Feedback received from a DD consumer

Ms. Abigail,  
I just wanted to send you a warm and personal note to say I cannot thank you enough for the kindness and help you provide to me and my daughter with our SSI.

The world should surely be filled with more people like you. Again, you are appreciated.

**Abigail Cooke is a senior counselor in the St. Louis South DD office.**

### Feedback received from Heartland Hospital regarding Thomas Wilson

I just wanted to thank you for not only doing your job but doing it in such a way as to restore dignity and hope. Thank you for giving the impression that your comments were not just the socially correct things to say but that you really did mean to help.

**Thomas Wilson is a senior counselor in the St. Joseph VR office.**

### Feedback received from a DD counselor in Los Angeles, Calif. (A Missouri DD team assisted California DD counselors.)

Hi Don,  
Thank you for all of your help. LA West finished the fiscal year with some pretty amazing numbers. We found strength in us we never knew we had, and it's all because of you and your fellow analysts from Missouri. I took your advice and started to work smarter. My caseload is going down little by little, which is an amazing feeling.

**Don Pfleger is a senior counselor in the St. Louis South DD office.**

### Feedback received from a DD consumer about Diana Moresi

I wanted to drop you a line to let you know your actions and good intentions have not gone unnoticed. Thank you so very much for your kindness, patience and diligence. You are a gem!

**Diana Moresi is a senior counselor in the Kansas City DD office.**

## Service Awards

We are fortunate to have so many talented and inspirational co-workers. Please take a moment to recognize and congratulate the following staff for years of dedicated service to our division.

### Five Years

**Geraldine Boeger**, senior counselor, St. Louis South DD office

**Stacy Brady**, senior counselor, Kansas City North VR office

**Donna Clay**, secretary III, West Plains VR office

**Catherine Cochran**, senior counselor, Springfield DD office

**Melissa Cox**, senior counselor, Jefferson City VR office

**Scott Crane**, district supervisor, Kansas City DD office

**Edith Drinkall**, secretary II, Jefferson City DD office

**Susan Henry**, senior counselor, Springfield DD office

**Evelyn Knapp**, senior counselor, Jefferson City DD office

**Rebecca Lamar**, senior counselor, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Carol McGeorge**, senior counselor, Rolla VR office

**Jay Mendell**, district supervisor, St. Louis West/Trans VR office

**Sheila Oligschlaeger**, senior counselor, Jefferson City DD office

**Christy Parker**, senior counselor, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Gail Purnell**, secretary I, St. Louis West/Trans VR office

**Aaron Spratt**, assistant district supervisor, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Starla Starke**, senior counselor, Columbia VR office

### 10 Years

**Leon Baker**, QA specialist, Springfield DD office

**John Broom**, director, claimant services, Central Office DD

**Cotter Brown**, assistant district supervisor, Kansas City DD office

**Ellie Burgstead**, QA specialist, Florissant DD office

**Melissa Guilliams**, senior counselor, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Ning He**, senior counselor, St. Charles VR office

**Karen Herrmann**, senior counselor, Springfield DD office

**Gwen Jackson**, senior counselor, West Plains VR office

**Nancy McCrory**, senior counselor, St. Joseph VR office

**Deborah McWilliams**, senior counselor, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Peaches Monroe**, administrative assistant II, St. Louis South VR office

**Jennifer Mueller**, senior counselor, St. Louis South VR office

**Patrice Proehl-Burnett**, senior counselor, Kansas City DD office

**Dolores Sehorn**, senior counselor, Kansas City North VR office

**Martha Smith**, secretary II, St. Louis South DD office

**Robin Smith**, senior counselor, Rolla VR office

**Barbara Tongate**, senior counselor, Kansas City DD office

**Greg Turner**, senior counselor, Springfield DD office

### 15 Years

**Jennifer Bates**, senior counselor, Springfield DD office

**Jane Boone**, hearing officer, Florissant DD office

**Susie Eidson**, assistant district supervisor, Jefferson City DD office

**Rosemary Reed**, administrative assistant II, Springfield DD office

**Beverly Smithers**, billing specialist II, Kansas City East VR office

**Glenda Wagner**, secretary III, Springfield DD office

### 20 Years

**Ken Bowman**, assistant district supervisor, Kansas City DD office

**Laura Higbee**, hearing officer, Kansas City DD office

**Karen Klenke**, district supervisor, St. Louis South VR office

**Donna Schudy**, secretary III, Springfield DD office

**Dorothy Sneed**, secretary III, St. Louis West/Trans VR office

**Rosemarie Torrence**, secretary II, St. Louis South VR office

**Melinda Trovillion**, secretary III, Cape Girardeau VR office

### 25 Years

**Cheryl Ahart**, secretary III, Chillicothe VR office



## 25 Years (cont.)

**Pam Chandler**, assistant district supervisor, Springfield DD office

**Denise Colvin**, administrative assistant III, Central Office VR

**Anne McDonough**, senior counselor, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Susan Murray**, senior counselor, St. Louis West/Trans VR office

**Pinkney Newell**, director, program development, Kansas City DD office

**Jesse Sitzes**, district supervisor, Farmington VR office

**Rick Smith**, senior counselor, Kansas City DD office

**Karen Taylor**, billing specialist II, Kansas City DD office

**Bonnie Young**, hearing officer, St. Louis South DD office

## 30 Years

**Sam Townsend**, district supervisor, St. Louis North VR office

## Staff Achievements

**Peggy Ottersbach**, senior counselor in the St. Charles VR office, became a Licensed Professional Counselor in March.

**Leslie Turner**, senior counselor in the Springfield North VR office, met the federal standards for the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development in December 2006.



## Mission Champion Awards

The Mission Champion Award recognizes exemplary employees who go above and beyond the agency's mission by performing outstanding service. The award is based upon the employee assisting other staff, consumers and/or partners in exceeding the agency's mission in the areas of customer service, employment outcomes, case management or other services as deemed appropriate by the employee's immediate supervisor.

### October 2006

LaShonda Collins	Secretary II	Kansas City Downtown VR
Toni Williams	Secretary I	Kansas City Downtown VR

### November 2006

Stephanie Riley	Assistant District Supervisor	Florissant DD
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### December 2006

Sadye Gartland	Senior Counselor	St. Louis West/Trans VR
Don Pfleger	Senior Counselor	St. Louis South DD
Donna Schepers	Human Resource Analyst III	Central Office VR
Sandy Weitkamp	Senior Counselor	St. Charles VR
Robert Zirfas	District Supervisor	Chillicothe VR

### January 2007

Christine Cruzen	Senior Counselor	St. Louis South DD
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### February 2007

Maureen Alexander	Regional Manager	Kansas City East VR
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### March 2007

Catie Alexander	Senior Counselor	Kansas City Downtown VR
Ellvan Markley	Senior Counselor	Jefferson City DD
Lydia Mitchell	Senior Counselor	St. Charles VR

## U.S. Senate Recognizes Rehab Counselors

This year, the U.S. Senate passed Senate Resolution 120, which designated March 22, 2007, as National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day. The resolution was co-sponsored by Sen. Saxby Chambliss of Georgia and Sen. Mary Landrieu of Louisiana in recognition of qualified rehab counselors' hard work and dedication.

In part, the resolution:

- designated March 22, 2007, as National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day.
- commended "all of the hard work and dedication that rehabilitation counselors provide to individuals in need and the numerous efforts that the multiple professional organizations have made to assisting those who require rehabilitation."

# HPO Achievement Awards

The High Performing Organization (HPO) Achievement Awards were developed to recognize and reward VR counselors who exhibit the core values and who provide quality services and employment outcomes.

## Quality Case Award – FY06

• July 2006	<b>Christine Storlie</b>	Senior Counselor	West Plains
• August 2006	<b>Leslie Stanley</b>	Senior Counselor	Chillicothe

## Individuals Entering into Active Status Awards – FY06

### General Counselors

• <b>Janet Childers</b>	Senior Counselor	Cape Girardeau
• <b>Jackie Crawford</b>	Senior Counselor	Springfield North
• <b>Debbi Browne</b>	Senior Counselor	Cape Girardeau
• <b>Gwen Jackson</b>	Senior Counselor	West Plains

### Deaf/Hard of Hearing Coop/Transition Counselors

• <b>Kim Vaughan</b>	Senior Counselor	Springfield North
• <b>Patricia Whitmore</b>	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North

### TBI/MI Counselors

• <b>Carrie Gegg</b>	Senior Counselor	Farmington
• <b>Virginia Stollings</b>	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North

## Individuals Reaching Competitive Employment Outcomes Awards – FY06

### General Counselors

• <b>Sadye Gartland</b>	Senior Counselor	St. Louis West/Trans
• <b>Don Jackson</b>	Senior Counselor	Chillicothe
• <b>Leslie Stanley</b>	Senior Counselor	Chillicothe
• <b>Pam McCarron</b>	Senior Counselor	St. Joseph

### Deaf/Hard of Hearing COOP/Transition Counselors

• <b>Dolores Sehorn</b>	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North
• <b>Stacy Brady</b>	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North
• <b>Leslie Turner</b>	Senior Counselor	Springfield North

### TBI/MI Counselors

• <b>Kim Conrad</b>	District Supervisor	Springfield South
• <b>Louella McNeill</b>	Senior Counselor	Farmington

(continued on p.8)



# HPO: Top Performers and Honorable Mentions for FY06

If a counselor qualifies in more than one area, he or she will receive the highest award and honorable mentions in the other qualifying categories. Counselors who were top performers and received honorable mentions for FY06 were as follows:

## Individuals Entering into Active Status

• Dolores Sehorn	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North
• Kim Vaughan	Senior Counselor	Springfield North
• Patricia Whitmore	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North
• Stacy Brady	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North
• Jackie Crawford	Senior Counselor	Springfield North
• Janet Childers	Senior Counselor	Cape Girardeau
• Debbi Browne	Senior Counselor	Cape Girardeau
• Becky Arthur	Senior Counselor	Joplin
• Carrie Gegg	Senior Counselor	Farmington
• Gwen Jackson	Senior Counselor	West Plains
• Maureen Hentz	Senior Counselor	St. Charles

## Individuals Reaching Competitive Employment Outcomes

• Dolores Sehorn	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North
• Stacy Brady	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North
• Leslie Turner	Senior Counselor	Springfield North
• Patricia Whitmore	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North
• Kim Vaughan	Senior Counselor	Springfield North
• Maureen Hentz	Senior Counselor	St. Charles
• Kim Conrad	District Supervisor	Springfield South
• Sadye Gartland	Senior Counselor	St. Louis West/Trans
• Jenny Yinger	Counselor	Kansas City Transition
• Virginia Stollings	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North
• Louella McNeill	Senior Counselor	Farmington
• Jackie Crawford	Senior Counselor	Springfield North
• Nancy McCrory	Senior Counselor	St. Joseph
• Don Jackson	Senior Counselor	Chillicothe
• Leslie Stanley	Senior Counselor	Chillicothe



Mike Ritter (right), MWSU special needs coordinator, presents the Outstanding Community Partnering Award to Yvonne Wright (left), district supervisor, and Tom Wilson (middle), senior counselor.

## St. Joe Office Awarded MWSU Honor

Last fall, the St. Joseph VR office received Missouri Western State University's (MWSU) Outstanding Community Partnering Award. The St. Joe office collaborates with Missouri Western and works closely with VR clients who are students with disabilities.

Congratulations to the St. Joseph office!

## Nomination for Harlan McGinnis Workforce Award

Last fall, Yvonne Wright, district supervisor of the St. Joseph VR office, was nominated for the Harlan "Mac" McGinnis Workforce Professional Award for her commitment to the Career Center philosophy and for the resources, strategies and ideas she brings to improving the system.



# DD Team Goes West to Assist California

Last fall, a team of DD counselors traveled to California to assist staff in the Los Angeles office with caseload management. Michael Grochowski, regional commissioner for the Kansas City region of the Social Security Administration, sent an e-mail to Michelle Scherer, DD administrator, thanking her and everyone involved in the project.

"It is quite an honor to lead this region because of the commitment of our people to public service and their demonstration of that commitment," Grochowski said.

Grochowski also passed along a letter from Peter Spencer, regional commissioner of the San Francisco region, that is excerpted as follows:

*Dear Michael,*

*On behalf of the San Francisco Region and the California DDS, I want to offer our sincere thanks to the Kansas City Region. In particular, we want to thank the Kansas City RO Medical Staff, the MAMPSC DPB Medical Staff, and the Missouri DDS for the outstanding assistance provided to help achieve the national*

*initial claims pending goal in fiscal year 2006. These components remotely conducted medical case ratings on approximately 1,750 cases for the California DDS which was of tremendous assistance.*

*In addition to providing MC ratings remotely through eDib, the Kansas City Region and the Missouri DDS went the extra mile and also sent staff to the San Francisco Region to provide even greater assistance.*

*Our thanks also go to Wayne Gillam of the Missouri DDS for sending ten SDM Examiners to the California DDS. Through effective coordination with local management, the SDM examiners listed below were placed in California's two prototype branches and over a two week period amazingly processed 646 SDM cases. This is a magnificent achievement and we thank Wayne, his management team, and the examiners involved.*

- Brenda Steck, assistant district supervisor, St. Louis South
- Brian Deuster, district supervisor, Florissant
- Janet Broaden, hearing officer, Florissant

- Joetta Snell, senior counselor, Cape Girardeau
- Don Pfleger, senior counselor, St. Louis South
- Jennifer Bates, senior counselor, Springfield
- Pam Chandler, assistant district supervisor, Springfield
- Mike Schiffner, assistant district supervisor, Springfield
- Sheila Beggs, hearing officer, Cape Girardeau
- Tonja Higgins, senior counselor, Kansas City

*The Kansas City Region's CD staff, ROMCs, DPB MCs, and the Missouri DDS displayed openness, flexibility, and an ability to coordinate work in an environment of constantly changing demands that allowed us to get through a challenging year.*

*Please extend our sincere thanks to all of your staff who played a role in making this happen. Please also keep in mind that the San Francisco Region will return the favor at some time in the future.*

*Sincerely,  
Peter D. Spencer*

The **VR Voice** is published by the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, a division of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

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